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## States near consensus on Colorado River pact

### Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- The seven Colorado River states are on the verge of an agreement that would give Southern California 15 years to cut its use of river water.

If California failed to follow through, the grace period would end immediately and upriver states could start withholding water, under a plan that could be approved by midsummer, negotiators said.

The plan was scheduled to be presented to representatives of the states at a meeting in Phoenix today.

Southern California water districts have been using more than their legal share of Colorado River water for their growing metropolitan areas and to irrigate crops in desert regions.

The new plan calls for them to conserve water and store surplus water in wet years in giant new reservoirs such as 4,500-acre Diamond Valley Lake, which began filling in March. Other states are concerned California has delayed projects such as the \$200 million lining of the All-American Canal to prevent water leakage.

Penalties for California are key to getting Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming to go along with the plan, David Hayes, deputy secretary of the federal Department of the Interior, told California lawmakers at a hearing Wednesday.

"California ... can count on potentially a full aqueduct for Southern California for 15 years. But it's not a free ride; it's only if California adheres to its promises of reductions over time," Hayes said. "California has to follow through or it will be at risk of not having the water supply it needs for Southern California."